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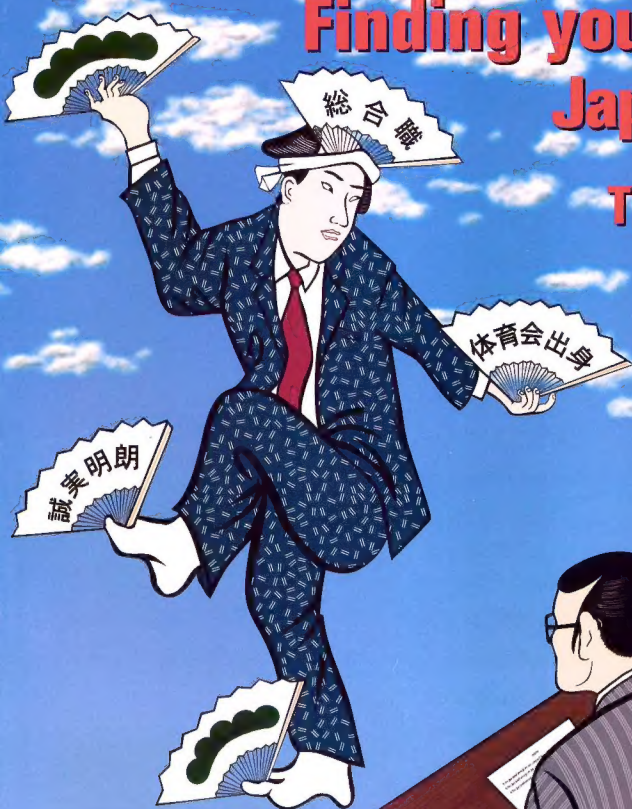
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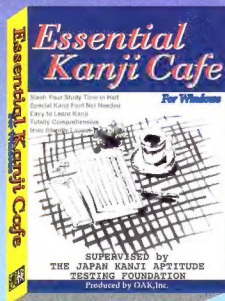


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page 12

Manga

- 18 *Ninja Mugei-chō* • 忍者無芸帖
Not all ninja are cunning masters of stealth and deception.
- 23 *Ai no Wakakusayama Monogatari* • 愛の若草山物語
Terashima Reiko's autobiographical manga about two working women still living with their parents.
- 30 *Hyakunen Senryū* • 百年川柳
An ode to scattered showers.
- 32 *American Comics* • アメリカの漫画
Dilbert and *Garfield*—in Japanese.
- 51 *Yūyake no Uta* • 夕焼けの詩
Grandma outfoxes her strait-laced daughter.
- 69 *Kaiketsu!! Todo Kachō* • 快傑!! トド課長
Masumi discovers that her old friend has passed her by on the ladder of promotion.



Miscellaneous

- 5 Publisher's Note
- 6 Letters
- 7 Bloopers
- 92 Cultural Exchange
- 94 Classified Ads

Features

- 12 **The Japanese Job Search**
With lifetime employment still the rule, job-hunting for a Japanese college senior is a serious matter. (In bilingual *taiyaku* style.)
- 36 **TV Dramas**
Miniseries are ratings gold—thanks to tried-and-true plots and hot young stars. Kathleen Morikawa tunes you in.

Departments

- 9 **Brand News**
A cheese and *chikuwa* snack—something to sing about!
- 40 **Book Review**
The Encyclopedia of Japanese Pop Culture, by Mark Schilling.
- 41 **On the Bookshelf**
Recently released books about Japan.
- 44 **Computer Corner**
Doug Horn gives you the picture on *KanjiScan* OCR software for Japanese text.
- 46 **Cooking Corner**
Kanten, a jelly-like substance derived from seaweed, has an intriguing history.



page 69

Language Learning

- 86 **Basic Japanese: Hodo**
It's a matter of degree.
- 93 **Vocabulary Summary**
Words from this issue of *Mangajin*.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This note is primarily for our subscribers. That doesn't mean we don't appreciate those of you who buy *Mangajin* from newsstands and bookstores. We have been very fortunate to get much better newsstand distribution than anyone thought possible back in 1989 when we were getting started. That includes even the big chain stores like Barnes & Noble and Borders, along with the specialty bookstores where you might expect to find us. (We are not in every one of those chain stores—the decision to carry a particular title is still up to each manager.) Once the magazine is on the rack, however, people have to buy it to make the system work, so newsstand purchasers are an important part of our ecosystem. In fact, most of our subscribers are “converted” newsstand purchasers.



Our subscribers are very important to us, and we try to stay in touch. We have always maintained our subscriber database in house. It gives us better quality control, and we can respond more

quickly to address changes, special requests, etc.

In the very beginning we kept a mailing list in WordPerfect on an old XT-type PC—actually a surprisingly workable system. We printed labels on a small dot-matrix printer that had a bad habit of going out of alignment, so as I kept an eye on the printer, I got to know the names of many of our subscribers. Eventually, we switched to a real database custom-programmed in a software called 4th Dimension. That database served us well for a number of years, but with the launch of our catalog operation last year the time had come for a new system. After much deliberation and consultation, we decided on FileMaker Pro.

The new database went into service with issue No. 66. The old database had been through a lot of changes under various business managers and subscription managers, and, although it served its purpose, there were some problems when the old data was flowed into the new database. We have tried to catch and correct these, but if your address is not exactly as it should be (if, for example, your zip code has changed, or if your apartment number is not correct), please let us know by e-mail (orders@mangajin.com) or through our subscription hotline (1-800-552-3206).

We occasionally get calls from concerned subscribers who want to make sure their subscriptions do not lapse. Of course, we send out renewal notices starting two issues before expiration, but if you suspect your renewal notice somehow went astray, or if you just want to see how much longer you have on your subscription, look at the top left part of the mailing label from your subscriber copy. The number there is the last issue in your subscription. Thanks for keeping it current.

Wayne P. Simon

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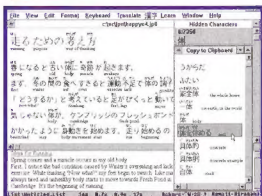
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LETTERS

Letters to the Editor

Mangajin welcomes comments by letter, fax, or e-mail, although we reserve the right to edit for clarity or length. Please address correspondence to: Editor, P.O. Box 77188, Atlanta, GA 30357 (Editor@Mangajin.com).

日本語の投書も大歓迎です。日本在住の方は世界出版研究センターへ送っていただければ結構です：〒107 東京都南青山2-18-9, Fax: 03-3479-4436

More long manga

I was sorry to see that there was no continuing story in issue No. 65. I like to read excerpts from longer manga as it allows me to get a true feeling of the style of the author and to get involved in the story. I also feel that a good way to learn a specific vocabulary is to see the same words come up over and over again in three subsequent issues. Also the subject matter is often more interesting in longer manga.

MARIE LABELLE
Montreal

Loosen up!

I am a Japanese male, 26. I have enjoyed reading *Mangajin* since No. 26. I believe your magazine helps non-Japanese to understand not only language but also culture and habits.

Please don't be conservative when selecting comics. Just as non-Japanese want to find out more about Japan, I want to find out more about the US and other countries. I feel your choice of US comics is very conservative. I would like to see comics like "Beavis and Butthead" to learn more about Americans of the same generation.

ADACHI ATSUSHI
Kawasaki, Japan

Washlet worries

Having just returned from a business trip to Japan, I was quite interested in the "Rise of the Washlet" article in *Mangajin* No. 65. Missing from the article, however, was a helpful listing of the various push-buttons on such devices. For those proficient in katakana, *sutoppu*, *shawā*, and *dorai* can be readily recognized as stop, shower, and dry, but what is the function of the *chāmu* ("charm") button? No doubt this is yet

another creative example of *gairaigo*, but like many such "loan words" the meaning is not immediately clear to a non-Japanese. Even the pictograph on the button—a female hovering over a mini-fountain—only deepens the mystery. The fact that the toilet in question was in the men's room is an additional complication.

A braver soul, no doubt, would have solved the mystery through direct experimentation, but somehow I find the idea of a toilet seat plugged directly into an electrical socket to be somewhat unnerving. Also, knowing how the Japanese like very hot baths, I'm a little concerned with respect to the temperature set-point of such devices—is fuzzy logic used to ensure an optimum level of warmth?

BOB NASH
Webster, NY

Most washlets come with temperature control capabilities, but we can't offer any guarantees. Although different brands have different buttons, here are a few more options found on a washlet's remote control:

洗浄 (senjō), "wash/rinse"

止 (tomeru), "stop"

ビデ水勢調節 (bide suisei chōsetsu), "bidet water control"

乾燥 (kansō), "dryer"

温水 (onsui), "warm water"

便座 (benza), "seat"

Websites of the moment

With a Japanese film ("*Unagi*") sharing top honors at Cannes this spring, the time seems right to explore websites devoted to Japanese cinema:

The "*Unagi*" homepage:

<http://www.shochiku.co.jp/english/unagi-e/index-e.html>

The Kinema Club is an informal group of scholars studying Japanese cinema and other moving-image media. Reviews, links, resources.

<http://pears.lib.ohio-state.edu/Markus/Welcome.html>

Blooper Classics: Don't let them happen to you

Some bloopers—like the following examples—are committed by almost everyone. With this we officially declare a moratorium on the publishing of bloopers involving these words.



And we wonder why many Japanese people approach foreigners with trepidation!

MARK WERDIN
St. Ignatius, MT

One day, while helping some students with the daily school-cleaning ritual, one of them correctly pointed out that I had arrived at school very late that day. Wanting to tell them I was only human (*ningen*), I unwittingly informed them that I was only a carrot (*ninjin*). They all fell about laughing, leaning on their brooms, probably thinking, "Yeah, I'd say that's about right."

TONY MITCHELL
Saga-ken, Japan

Recently I was volunteering at a nursing home for Japanese people in Los Angeles. One of the residents asked what I was studying in school, and I told him that I had already graduated and was currently unemployed due to a layoff. The resident responded with, "How sad, you are a bimbo." My shocked facial expression must have said something because he repeated the remark. When I came home that night I told my mother about the incident. She just laughed and explained he had probably called me "*binbō*"—"poor." Boy was I embarrassed.

SUSAN SHOHO
Los Angeles

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I went to Japan on the JET Program without previously studying Japanese, and during my first year I had a lot of problems keeping similar-sounding words straight in my head. I quickly found out I was not alone, however. My friend confessed that he sometimes had a problem distinguishing between words like *kawaii* ("cute") and *kowai* ("frightening/scary"). Before he got it straight in his mind, he had unwittingly approached many mothers with their little kids, crouched down to the child's level, and in a friendly tone said, "*Kowai, ne!*" ("My, isn't it frightening!").

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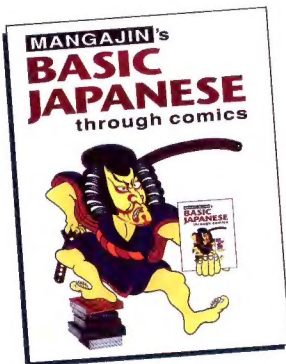
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back to the BASICS

In reader surveys over the years, *Mangajin's Basic Japanese* column has consistently been voted the most popular part of the magazine. (Check out the *Basic Japanese* in this issue to see why!)

Back in 1993, we compiled those popular *Basic Japanese* columns from the first 24 issues in book form, and called it *Basic Japanese Through Comics*. Thousands of readers have found it to be a wonderfully entertaining way to gain greater cultural and linguistic insights. It has proved popular with business people as well as students and teachers—fans range from hard-core Japanophiles to those whose interest is only casual.

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チーちく Chiichiku



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The Japanese have a reputation for bringing in the best of Western culture and blending it with their own, resulting in unique new hybrids. This seems to be especially true in the area of foodstuffs. That mainstay of Japanese cuisine, *tempura*, was originally picked up from the Portuguese. *Tonkatsu*, superficially nothing more than a pork cutlet, has been refined and re-defined in a way that is now uniquely Japanese. *Kasutera* ("castella," a kind of pound cake), *hayashi-raisu* ("hash-*rice*"), *omu-raisu* ("omelet-*rice*"), and *anpan* (a bread roll filled with sweetened bean paste) are all based on culinary imports.

Now, a product called Chiichiku offers the unlikely combination of cheese (Camembert, no less) and *chikuwa*. Written with kanji meaning "bamboo-ring" (竹輪), *chikuwa* is made from fish paste and fashioned into a cylindrical shape. Unlike some of its milder-flavored cousins, *chikuwa* has a rather strong fishy taste, making it a favorite of cats, but it's a taste that, for most foreigners, is an acquired one. (The Chiichiku package notes that the product's fine, dark texture comes from fish skin, so there is definitely no shortage of fishy flavor here.)



The name Chiichiku is written in a way that hints at its combination of ingredients. The initial *chii* is written in katakana, the script generally used for imported words. In fact, it is simply the first sound of the word *chizu* (チーズ), as "cheese" is rendered in the Japanese phonetic syllabary. The second part, *-chiku*, is written in hiragana, the standard phonetic script, in keeping with its identity as a Japanese word.

The little singing birds over the name show why this is such a catchy name: *chiichiku* is a slight variation of the sound associated with the call of little birds (usually *piichiku*, *pāchiku*). As the ad copy states, "You can't forget the name or the delicious taste." To clinch the association with bird calls, it describes the taste as *fushigi-na aji no hāmonii* ("a marvelous/mysterious harmony of flavors").

Cheese, although an imported food, has long been a part of Japanese cuisine. One of its more popular uses has been as *o-tsumami*, the kind of finger foods eaten with adult beverages, and the copy in this ad for Chiichiku starts out "With beer, with wine, with saké . . ." It goes on, however, to add "... that's right, in lunch boxes too," positioning Chiichiku as a taste treat for the entire family.

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自動車メーカーのビデオを使った会社説明は約1時間。続いて工場見学が30分。最後に同じ大学ごとに3人1組で15分ほどおしゃべりするグループ面接が2回あった。清美さんのグループは女子学生2人に男子学生1人で、これに25歳前後の男性の先輩社員2人が加わった。

その席で志望職種を聞かれた清美さんは、昇進や昇給が一定の範囲内にとどまる「一般職」と答えた。本当は実力次第で昇進できる「総合職」を希望しなかった。けれども、この自動車メーカーの採用実績を調べたら、総合職に採用されたのは上位校の男子学生ばかり。女子学生が総合職で入るのは難しいと清美さんは判断したわけだが、さっきまで笑顔を見せていた先輩社員が少し怒った顔で彼女をたしなめた。「4年間勉強してきたのに、どうして総合職を希望しないのか」と。清美さんは反論しなかった。逆効果になると思ったからだ。

The company presentation of the auto maker consisted of a video that lasted about an hour, then there was a tour of the factory for about 30 minutes. Finally, groups of three students from the same university were formed, and there were two informal, chatty group interviews of about 15 minutes each. There were two female students and one male in Kiyomi's group. They were joined by two male employees of about age 25.

One Company, Two Tracks

In general, there are two tracks of employment in a corporation: *ippan-shoku* ("general employment")—home of the Office Lady and other low-level clerical workers—and *sōgō-shoku* ("comprehensive employment"). The *sōgō-shoku* offers opportunities for promotion in exchange for hard work and long hours; the *ippan-shoku* offers a job with fewer responsibilities and shorter hours but little chance for advancement. Within the *sōgō-shoku* there are different tracks based on job type (administration, engineering, sales, etc.). Although the situation is changing, at present women are more likely to choose the first course than the second.

When she was asked which type of employment she was interested in, Kiyomi replied *ippan-shoku*—in which advancement and salary are limited to within a certain range. She really wanted to try for *sōgō-shoku*, where she could advance based on her abilities, but she had researched the employment practices of this

particular automaker and found that it was almost exclusively male students from top-level schools who were hired on the *sōgō-shoku* course. Kiyomi had decided that it would be difficult for a woman student to be hired for that course, but the employee "interviewer," who had been smiling until then, seemed a little perturbed and reproached her: "You've studied for four long years, why don't you want to try for *sōgō-shoku*?" Kiyomi didn't argue; she thought it would be counterproductive.

Going to the bathroom just got a little bit nicer.



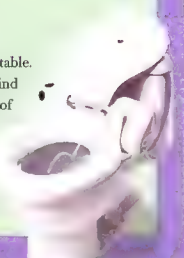
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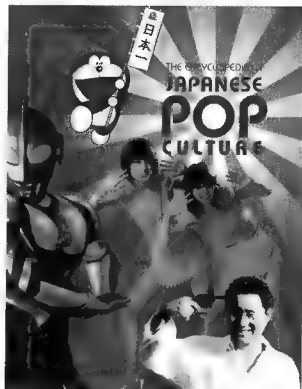
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清美さんが参加した会社説明会はこれまでに9社。中学レベルの国語や算数のテストを20分ずつ実施した会社もあった。

清美さんとは対照的に山田君に対する企業の反応は早かった。すでに12月末に興服の専門商社から会社案内が届いた。極めて順調な滑り出しである。ところが3月ごろになると、山田君の興味は銀行に移ってきた。九州出身の山田君は地元の地方銀行の本店を訪問した。

それまでのハガキや手紙のやりとりとは違って初めて生身の人間と接することになり、山田君は少し緊張した。こんなときの対策が面接のマニュアル本に細かく書いてある。だが、山田君はマニュアル本を買わなかった。

日本の大学のスポーツ・クラブは「体育会」と呼ばれ、先輩と後輩の上下関係がはっきりしている。山田君は大学の水球部に所属し、大学の合宿所で生活している。そんなタテ型の組織で山田君は先輩に対する礼儀を厳しく教え込まれた。日本の会社も集団行動や協調性を重んじるタテ型組織なので、体育会出身の学生は企業に人気がある。「ある会社に自分が書類選考に通った理由をきいたら、『水球部の合宿所に住んでいるところに興味があった』と言われました」(山田君)

This was the ninth *kaisha satsumeikai* Kiyomi had attended. Some of the companies had administered 20-minute tests of middle-school-level Japanese and mathematics.

In contrast to Kiyomi's experience, the reaction of the companies to Takao had been fast. By the end of December he had already received a brochure from a trading company that specialized in kimono. He was off to a good start. Around March, however, his interest changed to banking. He visited the main office of a local bank in Kyushu, where he was from.

Unlike the exchange of cards and letters so far, this was the first time he had come in contact with a live human being, and he was a little nervous. Interview manuals give detailed instructions about how to deal with such situations, but he had not bought a manual.

The hierarchical relationships [between senior and junior members] of sports clubs (*taiiku-kai*) at Japanese schools are very clearly defined. Takao was on the water polo team, and he had lived in the team dormitory. In that kind of hierarchy, he received strict training in proper etiquette toward his superiors. Japanese companies are also hierarchical organizations that place heavy emphasis on group activities and group harmony. For that reason, students from sports clubs are popular with corporations. Takao reports that when he asked one company why he had passed the "paper selection" (screening based on application documents), he was told, "We were interested in the fact that you had been living in the water-polo dormitory."

(continued on page 50)

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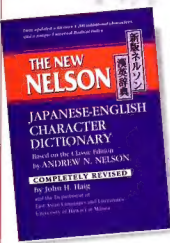


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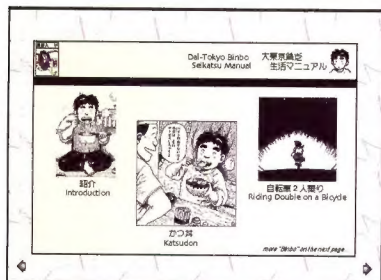
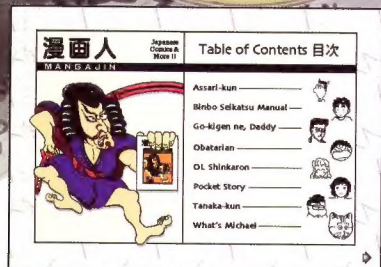
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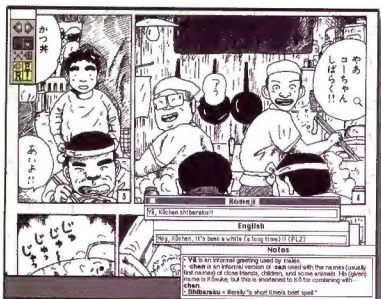
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